

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SHARP INCREASE IN CAR SEARCHES FOR FRG-BERLIN
TRANSIT TRAVELERS

REF: 77 BONN 21531

SUMMARY: BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE FOR FEDERAL
AFFAIRS MET JANUARY 16 TO DISCUSS INCREASE IN SEARCHES OF
VEHICLES USING FRG-BERLIN TRANSIT ROUTES BY GDR AUTHORITIES
IN LAST FEW MONTHS. DESPITE RECENT RISE IN NUMBER OF VEHICLE
SEARCHES, BERLIN SENAT FIGURES INDICATE THAT NUMBER OF ARRESTS
AND TURNBACKS OF PERSONS USING TRANSIT ROUTES DURING 1977
WAS ABOUT THE SAME AS IN 1976, THE AUGUST 13, 1976 STERNFAHRT
EXCEPTED. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE FOR FEDERAL
AFFAIRS AND ALL-BERLIN QUESTIONS CONSIDERED ON JANUARY 16 THE
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PROBLEM OF THE "DRASTICALLY INCREASED" NUMBER OF GDR SEARCHES
OF THE VEHICLES OF FRG-BERLIN AUTOBAHN TRANSIT TRAVELERS. WHILE
FROM JANUARY THROUGH AUGUST 1977, THE MONTHLY AVERAGE OF SUCH
SEARCHES AT WEST BERLIN CHECKPOINTS (WHICH INVOLVE A COMPLETE GOING-
THROUGH OF THE AUTOMOBILE) WAS 10 CARS PER MONTH, IN THE LAST
QUATER OF THE YEAR, THERE WERE 190 SEARCHES, OF WHICH 100 TOOK
PLACE IN DECEMBER ALONE. IN JANUARY 1978, THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN

MORE THAN 60 CASES OF SEARCHES REGISTERED, ACCORDING TO THE
FEDERAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

2. SENAT SOURCES INDICATE TO US THAT THESE SEARCHES ARE DIRECTED
ESPECIALLY AGAINST TRAVELERS WHO ARE DRIVING AT NIGHT OR WHO STOP
AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE TRIP AS WELL AS AGAINST YOUNGER PERSONS,
PEOPLE WHO HAVE EMIGRATED FROM THE GDR, AND WEST GERMANS WITH
RELATIVES IN THE GDR.

3. CDU BERLIN CAUCUS CHAIRMAN HEINRICH LUMMER ACCUSED THE SENAT
OF HAVING INCOMPLETELY INFORMED THE FEDERAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
ABOUT THE INCREASED GDR CONTROLS, ACCORDING TO BERLIN DAILY
TAGESSPIEGEL. HE ACCUSED SENATOR FOR FEDERAL AFFAIRS KORBER
OF HAVING KNOWINGLY HELD BACK ESSENTIAL INFORMATION. LUMMER
DEMANDED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BRING UP THE QUESTION
FO FRG-GDR CONTROLS AT THE NEXT TRANSIT COMMISSION MEETING.

4. WEST BERLIN POLICE HAVE ALSO NOTED AN INCREASE IN GDR
CONTROLS. TAGESSPIEGEL REPORTS THAT FOR THE WEEKEND OF
JANUARY 14-15 THERE WERE 20 CASES IN WHICH CARS WERE TAKEN
OUT OF THE LINES AT GDR WEST BERLIN CHECKPOINTS AT STAAKEN
AND DREWITZ; IN SOME CASES THESE AUTOS WERE SEARCHED ON THE
BASIS THAT THE DRIVERS HAD STOPPED ALONG THE WAY.

5. IN CONTRAST TO EVIDENCE OF SHARP RISE IN GDR SEARCHING
OF TRANSIT TRAVELERS' VEHICLES, SENAT STATISTICS INDICATE
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THAT NUMBER OF ARRESTS OF TRANSIT TRAVELERS AS WELL AS NUMBER
OF TRAVELERS TURNED BACK WAS ABOUT THE SAME IN 1977 AS IT
WAS IN 1976, THE 1976 "STERNFAHRT" EXCEPTED. IN 1976, THERE
WERE 159 ARRESTS, COMPARE TO 158 IN 1977. THE NUMBER OF
TRAVELERS TURNED BACK WAS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE MASSIVE
TURN-BACK DURING THE AUGUST 13 CDU JUNGE-UNION STERNFAHRT
ON THE BERLIN WALL'S ANNIVERSARY, ALSO COMPARABLE IN 1976
AND 1977. IN 1976, 39 ORDINARY TRAVELERS WERE TURNED BACK,
PLUS AN ADDITIONAL 494 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STERNFAHRT (TOTAL
533 FOR THE YEAR). IN 1977, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE TURNED
BACK WAS 50.

6. COMMENT: WHILE WE WOULD BE HESITANT TO CALL THE SENAT'S
FIGURES ON SEARCHES OF TRANSIT TRAVELERS' VEHICLES ABSOLUTELY
ACCURATE, GIVEN THAT ON THE ONE HAND SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE
FAILED TO REPORT BEING SEARCHED AND ON THE OTHER THE RECENT
PUBLIC ATTENTION THE SEARCHES HAVE RECEIVED MAY HAVE BROUGHT
FORTH MORE REPORTS THAN USUAL, THE TREND TOWARD INCREASING
HINDRANCE HAS BEEN CLEAR. BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PRESIDENT PETER LORENZ EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO
ALLIED SENAT LIAISON OFFICERS ON JANUARY 18 ABOUT THIS
DEVELOPMENT AND INDICATED IT WOULD BE A TOPIC OF LIVELY

DISCUSSION IN THE HOUSE. A PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN CALLED FOR BY THE CDU FOR THE JANUARY 26 HOUSE SESSION. IN ASSESSING THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PROPORTION OF AUTOBAHN TRANSIT TRAVELLERS BEING THORORUGHL Y SEARCHED, ARRESTE OR TURNED BACK REMAINS VERY SMALL: IN 1976, THE LAST YEAR FOR WHICH COMPLETE FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE, 12.1 MILLION WEST GERMANS AND WEST BERLINERS TRANSITED THE AUTOBAHNS TO AND FROM BERLIN. THE VAST MAJORITY ENCOUNTERED NO DIFFICULTIES. GEORGE

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